

Agriculture and Colonization.

seeds are just about the same size as the grain of wheat, and the Keewatin Milling Company say that this is the weed they like least of all the many kinds of which the seeds appear among wheat.

By Mr. Pridham :

Q. Are they much troubled with the Russian thistle?—A. The Russian thistle occurs only in Canada along the southern borders of the Northern Pacific Railway in Manitoba and every effort is being made by the railway company to destroy it. If farmers in Manitoba and the North-west did one-quarter as much as the Northern Pacific Railway Company has done to keep down the weeds, it would be a great thing for Manitoba. The railway company recognized the fact that they are accused of having brought this weed in, and they have certainly made every possible effort to destroy it. I was along the railway last July, and I saw a gang of men going along from Brandon to Winnipeg right through, to stamp out this weed, and not only the Russian thistle, but any other dangerous weed, wherever it might occur along the line. They were mowing and keeping the weeds down all along the line and giving a grand object lesson to the farmers in the neighbourhood. I understand, too, that they did not do this spasmodically but regularly all the time, and it would be a good thing if the farmers would follow their example. I think probably the Russian thistle scare is one of the best things for Manitoba that has ever happened, because it has awakened the farmers there to the fact that they have got to do something with their weeds, and that they are menaced by a great danger. I detected for miles and miles, as I went along the Northern Pacific Railway the worst weed ever introduced into Manitoba and the North-west—Tumbling Mustard, which was first introduced, it is alleged, about Indian Head. During the past summer this was allowed to get such headway out there on the big Brassey farm, that they actually mowed down and ploughed 1,500 acres out of 2,000 and got no crop from it. The rest of the farm was kept sufficiently clean to get a crop, but this 1,500 acres they lost altogether. I asked Mr. Robert McKay, of Indian Head, to make a photograph for me of a large specimen, and here is a picture of that sample, it was three feet high and two feet across.

Tumbling Mustard has now spread all over that country round Indian Head, so that when you look out of the window as you pass by in the train, the country is just one sea of yellow with it. The trouble is that the farmers are not doing nearly as much as they ought to be doing to keep it down. Some told me I was running down the country by drawing so much attention to this weed. I reply to this: "It is absurd to talk like that. My duty is to call your attention to this, or any other dangerous enemy and make as much of it as I can." It has spread for miles and miles up there and also Southern Manitoba is now a sea of tumbling mustard, over hundreds of thousands of acres where this weed has been allowed to spread, and for a very trivial reason.

Tumbling Weeds. We have in Canada a weed called "tumbling weed," one of the pig weeds, which does very little harm. At the end of the season the dried up plant bearing its ripe seed separates from the ground and "tumbles," or is rolled along over the prairie by the wind and that is how it gets its name.

By Mr. Featherston :

Q. It is a kind of soft grass?—A. It is rather a soft thing in its earlier stages, but it gets very hard when it is ripe. It does very little harm because it develops late in the year and the farmers in this part of the country are not troubled by it at all. When the farmers in the North-west were warned about the weed, which I have spoken of, which I have called "tumbling mustard" but which was also called "tumbling weed," they said "Oh, it is only tumbling weed, that won't do any harm." I was talking to a farmer about it in the west, and I spoke of it as "tumbling mustard." He said, "Oh, well, if it is a mustard we have got to see to it." This showed me how much there was in a name, and I have called it mustard ever since. Three years ago, I sent to Mr. McKay, our superintendent at Indian Head, for a large seeding specimen, and we found by actual count that there were over half a million seeds borne by that single